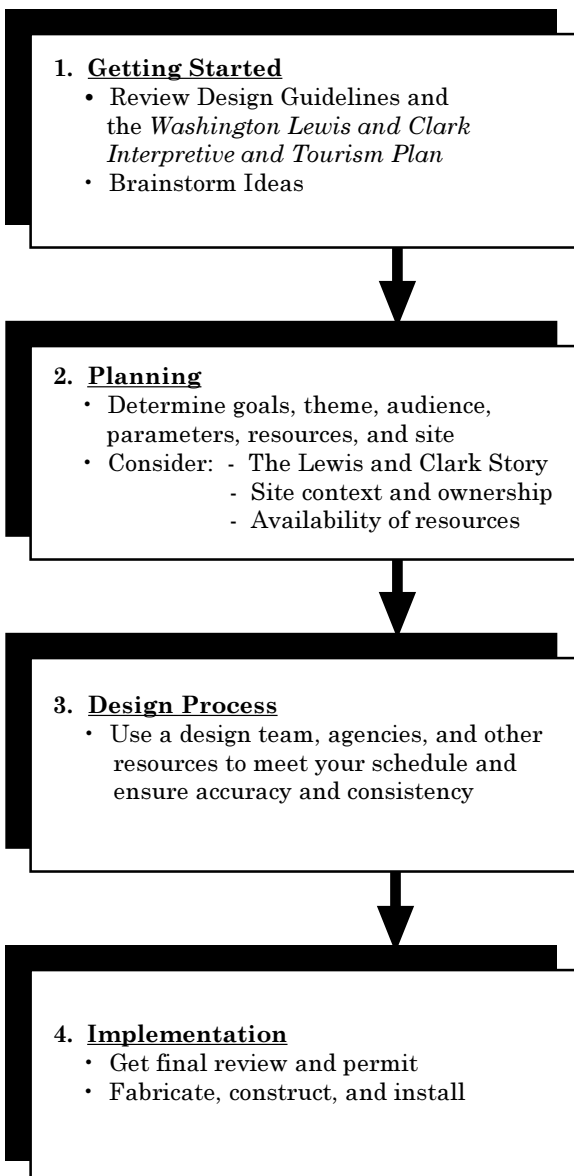


II. How to Create Interpretive Exhibits — The Process

Using these design guidelines is a great first step toward creating a Lewis and Clark Trail interpretive or orientation outdoor exhibit. Next, there are four basic steps you should follow to create interpretive exhibits. This section will help you understand this process, as well as provide some guidance and hopefully some inspiration. Here are the four basic steps:



Existing State Park Kiosk

1. Getting Started

A range of ideas for interpretive and orientation exhibits appropriate for outdoor use along Washington's segment of the Lewis and Clark Trail are included in these Design Guidelines. The ideas can be used as a starting point to generate options, suggestions, and considerations for outdoor exhibits. Start by browsing the contents of the guidelines to get a sense of the variety of possible elements ranging from orientation highway signs to interpretive panels and multifaceted interpretive kiosks. Brainstorm ideas for the various types of exhibits. Each element should have an appropriate scale, function, and purpose related to its context. Think about context sensitive design while browsing and brainstorming.

In addition to these guidelines, the *Washington Lewis and Clark Interpretive and Tourism Plan* provides recommendations for specific project improvements and interpretation for sites along the trail. The plan describes many potential sites in need of new or renovated interpretive exhibits.

Exhibits should fit with a site's physical and thematic context. The context includes not only the potential site, but also the story or theme that should be explored at that site related to the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

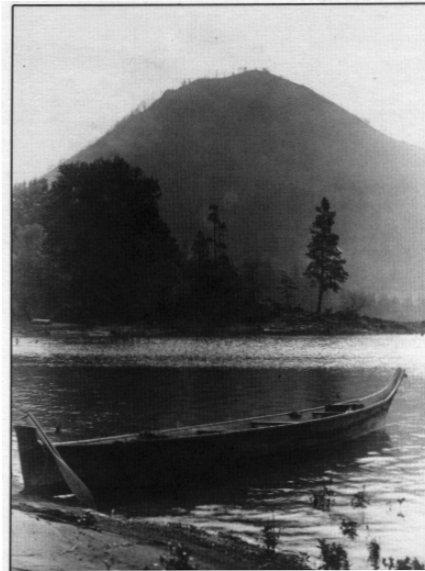
II. How to Create Interpretive Exhibits — The Process

The level of investment and effort should be based on the historical significance of the site in terms of Lewis and Clark Expedition history, and also the site's location and development potential. The next step, planning, will help to clearly assess the potential for the site and exhibit.

2. Planning

Planning is a critical step used to focus ideas into action. It is a dynamic process where the assessment of various opportunities and constraints can be weighed, and creative solutions can be developed. The following questions should be answered as part of the planning process:

- *What are the **goals**?*
Goals clarify why the project should be done and what is to be accomplished. They describe the project's importance. Define the purpose with goals.
- *What is the dominant **theme**?*
What, in particular, do the visitors need to be told? Visitors should learn about the theme and carry it on with them. The message and impression are made through a focused theme relating to an aspect of the story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition related to Washington.
- *Who will be the **audience**?*
Expect visitors of all ages, abilities, and nationalities. The interpretive exhibit should reach a broad audience and be accessible for all types of visitors. Try to understand all visitors' needs, interests, and expectations.



A Chinook canoe photograph in 1910 by Edward S. Curtis

- *What is possible within the **parameters**?*
Consider the opportunities and constraints for developing the exhibit. Consider site parameters relating to special qualities, history, resources, location, sensitive areas, etc.
- *What **resources** are available?*
Resources will help realize the vision of completing the project whether related to funding, labor, donations, site, and/or partners that share interest in the project goals. Consider future resources that may be available as well.
- *What is the potential of the **site**?*
Site enhancement or development reinforces the exhibit's desired communication. The site should be planned to facilitate the communication process for the intended audience, and to inspire the best possible interpretation. Plan the site so it supports the most appropriate interpretive message.

Important Planning Considerations

Through this planning process of determining and evaluating the goals, audience, parameters, resources, theme, and site, the following should be defined and refined:

Focusing on the Story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition

The history of the Lewis and Clark Expedition is the most important factor in interpretation that commemorates the bicentennial. The site's location in relation to the events, exploration activities, or other aspects of the Expedition will be crucial in determining what interpretive element will serve your needs best. As you consider the story to be told, ask the following questions:

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- What actually happened to the Corps of Discovery at or near this site?
- What are the facts?
- What do the journals say and show, and how should they be interpreted?
- What is the same and what has changed?

Places along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail where there is an opportunity



The Snake River

to tell a unique aspect of the story and present a theme should be evaluated to determine the appropriateness for development or the need for protection. Stories with themes are what the visitors want and what they will remember.

Getting the Facts Straight: True History, not Folklore

Accurate interpretation of the events of the Lewis and Clark Expedition is important. Interpretive accuracy and consistency must be maintained throughout the state. In community meetings across Washington, public participants expressed a strong interest in accurate interpretation and being “true to the history” of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

We all know that history has a way of recreating itself over time. Myths and legends passed down over the years related to Lewis and Clark are plentiful. For

example, many Northwesterners have claimed that William Clark climbed to the tops of Hat Rock and Beacon Rock. There is no evidence in the journals of the Corps of Discovery to substantiate these claims. Clark climbed many hills and slopes, and he did name these two rock formations, but nowhere in his journal, or in any of the other journals of the Expedition, is it written that he climbed these two beloved “icons” of the trail.

Other myths include beliefs that Clark canoed as far up the Columbia River as the mouth of the Yakima River and that Sacagawea guided the Expedition across the country. Some creative tales told over the years about the journey have often been the result of “unsolved mysteries” in the pages of the journals. Also, because modern-day geography has changed so much in 200 years, it is very difficult to identify the precise locations of campsites and significant events that occurred during the Expedition. Many islands, campsites, and shorelines described in the journals are now located under the slackwaters of the dams along the Snake and Columbia rivers.

So, “getting the facts straight” is an important part of developing interpretation for exhibits along the trail. This includes making sure that illustrations, photographs, and maps used in interpretation are historically and culturally accurate, as well as the written text. Be sure to check your reference materials with Lewis and Clark Trail historical experts. Also, representatives from the tribes in your region should be involved in the process of developing interpretive subject matter to further verify cultural and historical information.

The Site Context

The importance of the story, message, or theme should be balanced with site

II. How to Create Interpretive Exhibits — The Process

parameters. As you evaluate interpretive opportunities related to the site, ask the following questions:

- What and where are the best features of the site?
- Are there important or enjoyable views that can be enhanced?
- What are the special qualities that a visitor should be made aware of?

Develop an intimate understanding of the site. Consider the functional aspects of the site and how access may occur. Consider site features such as size, space, slope, plants, animals, water features, and seasonal variations.

Consider the site's proximity to other interpretation and tourism activities. Many of these factors were weighed in the *Lewis and Clark Interpretive and Tourism Plan*, which recommends sites to be developed. It is a good source to start with.

Respecting Sensitive Cultural Sites, Habitat Areas, and Private Properties

Confirm ownership and assess the environmental conditions at your site. Knowing ownership and environmental conditions will clarify expectations and feasibility early in the process.

In Washington, and all along the trail, there are many Expedition-related sites that are considered to be “sensitive” for various reasons. These sites may be sensitive because they are considered to be sacred or traditional sites by Native Americans. Some sites are sensitive because they are habitat for rare or endangered flora and fauna. In other cases, property owners may not wish to share their privately-owned Expedition-related sites with the general public. Some sites may be physically sensitive and not capable of withstanding too many people visiting them.

Be aware of the interpretive information you include in your exhibits, avoiding specific references to sites or mapped locations that may be culturally or biologically sensitive. When referencing specific landmarks and geologic features that are located on private property, be sure to indicate on the exhibit that the feature is not publicly accessible, and provide other educational messages that will help to preserve the sensitive nature of sites (i.e. laws prohibiting the collection of artifacts, “no public access beyond this



State Park Sign in Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area

point,” “please respect adjacent private properties,” etc.)

Interpretive exhibits and travel guides can help to protect sensitive areas by clearly directing the public to non-sensitive sites for experiencing the history and providing information that protects sensitive areas, as well as the safety of the traveling public (warning of rattlesnakes in the area, for example.) Some sensitive tribal sites and habitat areas may simply be “off limits” to the public, so always verify conditions in the area as part of planning your interpretive exhibit.

Pulling Together the Resources You Need

Resources will make or break the project. Resources include not only money, but also

II. How to Create Interpretive Exhibits — The Process

the availability of a site, partnerships, knowledgeable and talented people, volunteers, services, equipment, and even donated materials.

- Realistically evaluate all resources to determine the appropriate type and scale of exhibit. It is always better to do something well that is less ambitious, than to have a grand idea that cannot be realized.
- Balance resources with accurate cost estimates. This will require research and may require professional advice. Many costs will vary depending on availability of materials and labor.
- Use volunteers as a resource. This can sometimes offset lack of other resources. Recruit specialists such as design professionals or construction and manufacturing specialists to improve an exhibit's quality and to save time and money.
- Secure funding and other resources as soon as possible. There are publicly funded grants available through state and federal agencies. Private grants, donations, and miscellaneous fund raising activities deserve serious consideration. Many times, a grant can be leveraged through matching resources where the costs can be spread between different sources. For your use, a list of potential funding opportunities is included in the Appendix.

Coordinating with Your Neighbors to Avoid Repetition

It will be important for interpretation to be coordinated across the state in order to avoid repeating the same aspects of the Lewis and Clark story over and over again.

A list of people who recently have been involved in Lewis and Clark Bicentennial planning efforts from the various regions and communities across Washington is included in the Appendix to facilitate the coordination process. If you are planning an interpretive exhibit, you are encouraged to coordinate with representatives from other communities along the trail to understand their plans for interpretive projects and the topics they plan to cover.

Ideally, each interpretive exhibit should be unique. Collectively, the exhibits should tell a continuous story across Washington, leading visitors from one location to the next. One way to accomplish this and to minimize repetitive interpretation is to focus on topics and stories that are unique to the project site or region. Refer to the *Lewis and Clark Interpretive and Tourism Plan* for descriptions of specific events of the Lewis and Clark Expedition related to sites along the trail in Washington. The plan also provides a timeline of the events of the



View of Wallula Gap

Expedition that occurred during the time the Corps of Discovery was in what is now Washington. A summary of significant events of the Expedition by region is also provided in the plan. The timeline and events described in the plan could form the basis of interpretive subject matter for your project.

II. How to Create Interpretive Exhibits — The Process

3. Design Process

Through planning, feasibility is determined. An interpretive solution that best suits the context of the story, site, and available resources will be derived. The design process distills a vision from all the parameters, clarifies it, and places it on paper. The challenge of the design process is to achieve the goals in the most simple and elegant way. To meet this challenge, the right team, the appropriate resources, and an understanding of the factors that affect the schedule will be needed.

Design Professionals

Many design professionals are consultants, some of whom specialize in this type of creative work involving historic, cultural, and natural interpretation for outdoor exhibits. These include planners, interpretive artists and writers, historians, naturalists, scientists, graphic artists, architects, and landscape architects. Depending on the project, some or all of these may be needed.

For the design of the interpretive panels along the Lewis and Clark Trail, interpretive specialists might consist of a team including an interpretive artist, a writer specializing in historic and cultural subjects, and a historian. These are specialists that can take an idea and turn it into finished text and artwork. Some of these professionals can also coordinate the panel fabrication, choosing the best material and fabricator to suit the needs of the project.

Although there are some existing standard bases, stands, or kiosks on which panels could be mounted, the design of custom bases (presented as conceptual sketches later in these guidelines) will likely require the services of an architect or landscape architect before construction. These

designers often work closely with the leading agency and other project stakeholders. With the help of a landscape architect, a good site plan will help to ensure the interpretive exhibit is fully integrated into the site, being sensitive to the site's qualities, access, and environmental conditions. These professionals will produce a set of design plans and construction documents used to do a cost estimate, hire a contractor, and get the permits required for construction and installation. In some cases, if there are site development issues involving roadways and drainage, a civil engineer may also be required as part of the team. If not already addressed in the planning process, environmental specialists such as wetland biologists may need to be brought in early in the design process to do an environmental site assessment.

Public Agencies

Public agencies can provide various types of assistance, including written materials and contacts. They can help to clarify requirements and access other resources. Some agencies will review the proposed exhibit plans depending on location, exhibit content, and the site's environmental condition. Whether state, federal, or other public land, the land's managing agency or commission must be notified. Early communication will help avoid disappointment and investment in a design for undevelopable sites. In some cases, public agencies will consider partnering with other agencies or groups in order to increase the potential for a worthwhile project to move forward. A partnership increases the potential for funding and access to other resources.

Construction will require permitting as defined by the site's underlying jurisdiction. This may be a city, county, tribe, or a state or federal agency. Each may have their own

II. How to Create Interpretive Exhibits — The Process

process and codes that will have to be met in order to build. All public facilities are required to meet the standards and requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Finding out requirements prior to design will ensure the proposed exhibit is feasible. In some cases, there are other guidelines or requirements, such as in the Columbia Gorge, a nationally designated scenic area with required guidelines.

Reference Materials— Finding Information for Your Interpretive Project

An important part of the design process is research. Research will generate ideas, help define what is feasible, and help focus the content of the interpretive story at your site.

Reference materials, such as this document, are available through the public agencies participating in this effort and at many libraries. Historical societies are also good sources of reference information. There are also numerous books on the subject of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, as well as the journals themselves.

In referencing journal excerpts, there are several editions of the Lewis and Clark Expedition journals available, including Dr. Gary E. Moulton's edition, *Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition, Volumes 1 through 12*, highly regarded by most Lewis and Clark history scholars as the most comprehensive and up-to-date edition.

Other sources of information are listed in the bibliography in the appendix of these Design Guidelines. In addition to documents and books, there are many historical experts and scholars on the Lewis and Clark Expedition across the country who have a wealth of knowledge on the history of The Corps of Discovery.

In Washington, the Governor's Lewis and Clark Trail Committee is available as a

resource for verifying the accuracy of proposed interpretive subject matter. Contact information for the committee is listed in the Appendix.

Tribal representatives can help when information in the Lewis and Clark Journals might be "sketchy" and when more detail is needed. The perspectives of Native Americans along the trail should be included as part of Lewis and Clark interpretive projects. A list of tribal representatives is included in the Appendix. Also, refer to Section III, "Washington's Lewis and Clark Story" for more discussion related to tribal perspectives.

Depending on the context of your interpretive exhibit, you may also want to consult with professional archaeologists, natural scientists, ecologists, biologists, and other site-appropriate experts as part of your project.



Historic Photo of Beacon Rock

Historic photographs can also be valuable for use in interpretive exhibits, including photos from the 1800s and aerial photography of the rivers prior to the existence of the dams. These photographs can provide visual depictions of what the landscape was like when the Lewis and Clark Expedition passed through.

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A Note About Using Journal Excerpts

It is important to use the exact words in the journals to tell the story, and to help visitors understand the story as it was told by the members of the Expedition. It is recommended practice to use exact quotes and excerpts from the journals, with the spelling and grammar left in context. This also helps to ensure that stories are related accurately, according to how they were told in the journals.

When direct quotes and excerpts from the journals are used, the text should be shown within quotation marks. The text can also be shown in a special font type or in italics to help set it apart from other text that is not directly from the journals.

All other text that is not directly from the journals should be grammatically correct and spelled accurately. Check with tribal representatives on accurate spelling of Native American words and names of tribes (such as “Yakama” and “Klikitat,” which vary from geographic spellings in the region.)

Obtaining Permission to Use Information and Graphics

It is important to obtain permission to use written information, graphics, maps, photographs, and illustrations from their sources. Several agencies and institutions including historical societies, museums, the US Army Corps of Engineers, the National Park Service, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, tribes, and universities own the rights to Lewis and Clark materials, graphics, illustrations, and historic photographs. Although some graphics and information are already considered to be within the “public domain” and available for general public use, it is always important to verify the ability to use all materials proposed for interpretive exhibits.

Factors that Affect the Design Process and Schedule

Design is the process of developing the plans for what is to be built. This process can take anywhere from a few months to years depending on the complexity of the project and the site, but some of the common factors that affect the schedule include:

Property Ownership and Review

The property owner may be private or public. If private, the owner (and neighboring properties) must be in agreement with what is proposed. If the project is on public land, consent and review by the agency managing the property will be required. Also, check with the local approving jurisdiction (county or city) to determine if any special zoning or building permits are required.

Funding

The project must be funded and that funding will need to be secured before the project can be built. With many grants, it takes time from when the grant application is approved to when the funds are actually available. Sometimes funds are procured for phases of a project instead of the whole project, causing delay between phases.

Decision Making

When a large number of people are involved in the decision-making process, coordination, approval, and integration of their input and comments can lengthen a project's schedule.

Changes

Once a design becomes more refined, changes can become a large investment of time. Even changes that seem minor can create a chain reaction of adjustments that will be required to accommodate that one change. It is always better to address all issues early in the design process when changes can more easily be incorporated into the design.

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Viewpoint Overlooking the Snake River

Bicentennial Project Coordination

All proposed interpretive projects should be reviewed by the Agency Advisory Team (AAT) group representing a consortium of state agencies who are overseeing the state's efforts in preparing for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. If you are planning an interpretive project related to the Lewis and Clark Expedition in Washington, you will want to contact the Washington State Historical Society, acting as the lead agency for the AAT (refer to the Appendix for contact information). Remember the AAT's goal is not to force you into a pre-determined program. Rather, it is to help your exhibit become a "must see" stop along the trail of one of the most exciting stories our state has to tell.

4. Implementation

Implementation of the design is the process of getting final approval and permits, selecting a contractor and sign manufacturer, getting the project constructed, and having the panels fabricated and installed.

Final Review and Permits

From the design process, you will have a set of plans, construction documents for site work, a detailed cost estimate, and the

graphic layouts for the interpretive panels. With these plans, a site, and funding in place, you will now be ready to implement the project. Implementation starts with final review, approval, and permitting through the appropriate jurisdiction's requirements. The construction documents prepared by the architect and/or landscape architect will be submitted to the permitting agency. In addition to the local jurisdictional requirements, there may be other reviews and approvals needed prior to permitting. For example, in areas such as the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, or along other scenic corridors, there are required design guidelines.

If you are proposing a project on tribal lands or projects whose subject matter involves Native Americans, be sure to review with representatives of the tribe or tribes. Proposed interpretation should be sensitive to, and can benefit from, Native American perspectives and insights into the story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Also, as noted previously, Lewis and Clark interpretive projects should be reviewed by the AAT as coordinated by the Washington State Historical Society. Be sure to provide all reviewing groups with ample time to review. Review may result in a request for corrections, enhancements, and clarification before final permits are approved.

Fabrication, Construction, and Installation

With finished design plans and permits, fabrication of interpretive signs and construction of interpretive exhibits can begin. In some cases, sign fabrication could begin prior to permits, if it is certain the project will be approved. The sign fabricator should be scheduled ahead of time to ensure the interpretive panels are finished and delivered on time, in order to be installed near the end of construction.

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It is recommended that the site development work and the construction of the sign stand or kiosk structure be done by a licensed contractor. For publicly funded work and many times with private work, contractors are asked to submit a competitive bid for the work. The contractor is then selected based on the bid. On privately funded work, the contractor is sometimes selected through personal recommendation. The general contractor, in either case, will be responsible for building the project according to the design shown in the construction documents.